

# Earned Value Promotion

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### **What is the Earned Value Promotion?**

The 2019 Earned Value Promotion is intended to slow the decline of First-Class Mail® including Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM). As technology continues to disrupt mail volume the U.S. Postal Service® would like to encourage mailers to continue distributing BRM, CRM, and Share Mail® pieces. Mailers who register their Mailer ID (MID) information, permit(s), and use eligible Intelligent Mail® barcodes (IMbs) on their BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces may receive a postage credit for each mailpiece that is placed in the mailstream by the recipient and scanned during the promotion period.

The Earned Value Promotion will run for three months in 2019, from April 1 - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019. At the end of the promotion, the BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces will be totaled and the earned postage credit applied to the selected permit accounts. Once the participant accepts their credits in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) **the earned credits** will be applied to the enrolled permit(s). The participant can apply the earned credits to future mailings of First-Class Mail® Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and USPS Marketing Mail™ letters and flats.

#### **Why is the U.S. Postal Service® offering the 2019 Earned Value Promotion?**

The U.S. Postal Service is offering the 2019 Earned Value Promotion to help slow the decline of First-Class Mail® in general and Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) in particular. The U.S. Postal Service would like to ensure reply mail remains a relevant part of the First-Class Mail marketing mix. The 2019 Earned Value Promotion is designed to encourage mailers to continue providing BRM and CRM enclosures, as well as, Share Mail pieces in their outbound mailings.

#### **Who can participate in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion?**

The 2019 Earned Value Promotion will be offered to mailers who have Business Reply Mail (BRM), Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM), and Share Mail pieces.

#### **How will my company benefit from participating in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion?**

Your company will benefit from participating in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion by earning credits that can be applied to future mailings of First-Class Mail Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and USPS Marketing Mail letters and flats.

#### **Where can I find the requirements to participate in the promotion?**

Program requirements can be found on PostalPro at:

[https://postalpro.usps.gov/promotions/2019\\_earned\\_value\\_requirements](https://postalpro.usps.gov/promotions/2019_earned_value_requirements)

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### **PROGRAM PARAMETERS**

**What are the key promotion dates?**

**Registration Period:**

February 15 – March 31, 2019

***Note: Participants must register by the close of business on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2019***

**Promotion Period:**

April 1 - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Eligible Mail:**

Business Reply Mail, Courtesy Reply Mail, and Share Mail cards and letters

**Acceptance Period for Credits:**

The credits will be released when the mailer agrees to their volumes when the promotion ends.

***Note: The volumes must be accepted or disputed by September 15<sup>th</sup> 2019; otherwise the credits will be forfeited.***

**Earned Value Credits:**

\$0.03 for each BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces counted based on their same MID for **new participants**.

\$0.03 for each BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces counted based on meeting or **exceeding 95% of volume (Threshold)** for the same MID for **participants from the 2017 Earned Value Promotion**.

\$0.00 for each BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces counted when the Mailer **DOES NOT** meet their 95% of volume **(Threshold)** counted for the same MID for **participants from the 2017 Earned Value Promotion**.

Credits are available for their use once they have been released to the respective permit(s).

**Expiration Date for Credits:**

December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019

### **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

**How do I register for the Earned Value Promotion?**

Navigate to the Business Customer Gateway (BCG): <https://gateway.usps.com> and click on "Register for free" if you are not a USPS Business Customer. Then follow the prompts by entering the required fields to create a new business account. You will receive an automatic email confirming that your United States Postal Service Online Business Account has been activated.

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Then you will follow the next three steps to continue registering for the Earned Value 2019 Promotion:

- From the Mailing Services page you will select the [Promotions Incentives](#) module link and within that area choose the Earned Value Promotion
- Verify that all of your company locations, MIDs, and permit(s) are visible and selectable
- Follow the menu tabs until you are enrolled

### **What do I do if I already have a Business Customer Gateway (BCG) account?**

If you already have a BCG account, you will sign in at: <https://gateway.usps.com> and enter your user name and password. Then you will follow the next three steps to continue registering for the Earned Value Promotion:

- From the Mailing Services page you will select the Promotions Incentives module link and within that area choose the Earned Value 2019 Promotion. Verify that all of your company locations, MIDs, and permit(s) are visible and selectable
- Follow the menu tabs until you are enrolled

### **What are the registration requirements?**

Mailers must register their MIDs and their permit(s) on the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) and agree to participate in a survey about the promotion.

### **What mail is eligible for the 2019 Earned Value Promotion?**

The mail that is eligible for the 2019 Earned Value Promotion is Business Reply Mail, Courtesy Reply Mail, and Share Mail pieces with a valid IMb and a registered MID. The BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces that are entered into the mailstream will be counted.

### **How do I know that I am an Origin IMb TRACING™ customer?**

An Origin IMb Tracing™ customer does not have their MIDs appear in the IMb on their BRM and CRM mail pieces.

### **How do I participate in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion if I am an Origin IMb TRACING™ customer?**

Origin IMb TRACING™ customers who want to participate in the promotion will need to:

- Register their IMb Tracing MIDs and permit(s) in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG)
- Request the Origin IMb Tracing™ spreadsheet from the Earned Value Program Office or download it at enrollment
- Enter their MIDs, CRIDs, and your ZIP™ information
  - These are the ZIP+4® or ZIP+4+2 that are encoded in the IMb on your BRM and CRM
- Email the completed form to the Program Office at: [EarnedValue@usps.gov](mailto:EarnedValue@usps.gov)

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### **I am a MSP; can I register for my customer?**

A MSP may register for their customer if the MIDs and associated permit(s) accounts belong to the MSP. If a MSP registers his/her permit(s) and the credits are applied to those permit(s), it is between the MSP and their customer to decide how those credits are distributed.

### **MAILPIECE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **What are the mailing submission requirements?**

There are no special submission requirements. BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces can be enclosed in any class, category or shape of mail.

### **MAILPIECE/MAILING CONTENT REQUIREMENTS FOR BRM AND CRM**

#### **What are the mail piece/mailing content requirements?**

The Business Reply Mail and the Courtesy Reply Mail pieces must contain the Intelligent Mail barcode with the Mailer ID encoded to qualify. All qualifying reply mail must contain an Earned Value Promotion preregistered MID. Postcard and letter-size BRM must be barcoded with a valid and properly used ZIP+4 code on the mail piece and the same ZIP +4 code must be encoded within the IMb. The IMb on all BRM and CRM pieces must contain the barcode ID, service type ID, and correct ZIP+4 routing code. Permit holders must use the ZIP+4 codes and the IMb assigned by the USPS.

### **MAILPIECE/MAILING CONTENT REQUIREMENTS FOR SHARE MAIL**

#### **What are the mail piece/mailing content requirements?**

The Share Mail pieces must contain a unique or static Intelligent Mail barcode with the registered Mailer ID encoded to qualify. All qualifying Share Mail pieces must contain an Earned Value Promotion preregistered MID to be identified in the Earned Value Promotion. The IMb on the Share Mail pieces must contain the barcode ID, service type ID, MID, and Serial Number which is designated by the Publication requirements. Permit holders must use the MID assigned by the Share Mail Program Office.

***Participants interested in registering their Share Mail pieces must follow the Share Mail Publication requirements before enrolling in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion. The Program Office email is: [sharemail@usps.gov](mailto:sharemail@usps.gov).***

### **EARNED VALUE CREDITS CALCULATION**

#### **How are the credits calculated?**

At the end of the promotion, the earned value assigned to BRM will be multiplied by total BRM pieces counted based on each MID. The award value assigned to CRM will be multiplied by the

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total CRM pieces counted based on each MID. The award value assigned to Share Mail will be multiplied by the total Share Mail pieces counted based on each MID.

### New Participants

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total BRM Pieces Counted Based On Each MID

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total CRM Pieces Counted Based On Each MID

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total Share Mail Pieces Counted Based On Each MID

### Participants from the 2017 Earned Value Promotion

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total BRM Pieces Counted Based On **Meeting or Exceeding 95% of Volume (Threshold)** for the Same MID

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total CRM Pieces Counted Based On **Meeting or Exceeding 95% of Volume (Threshold)** for the Same MID

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total Share Mail Pieces Counted Based On **Meeting or Exceeding 95% of Volume (Threshold)** for the Same MID

Earned Value = \$0.00 for each BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces counted when the Mailer **DOES NOT** meet their 95% of volume **(Threshold)** counted for the same MID

### **How are the credits processed?**

The credits are scanned on BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces from April 1 - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019. The credits will not be scanned on pieces after June 30, 2019, even if the outbound mail pieces were sent prior to that date. Additionally, the credits cannot be scanned on BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces that do not contain an IMb.

### **How do you use your credits?**

To use the credits, you will need to submit your Postage Statement via Postal Wizard, Mail.Dat, or Mail.XML. On the Postage Statement you will enter "RR" as the promotion code which will instruct the PostalOne! to use the credits from the permit(s) that you requested. If you are using Postal Wizard, you will use the drop-down menu to select the Earned Value Promotion when completing the fields for what incentive you want to apply to that mailing.

### **How many permit(s) can I select for the credits?**

There is no limit on the number of permit(s) you can select. You will need to determine the proportion of the earned credit that will be applied to each permit and the total percentage for the allocated credits needs to equal 100%.

### **Am I allowed to change my permit(s) before USPS applies my credits?**

The mailer can change the permit(s) and the allocation of the credits up to the point the credits are accepted by the mailer.

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### **When will the credits be distributed to our permit(s)?**

The credits will be distributed to your permit(s) once you agree to them.

### **Where are the reply pieces scanned?**

The IMb barcodes are scanned and captured as part of our regular mail processing in IM-VIS and counted in the Share Mail System. The counts are then transferred to the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) where the credits will be calculated and displayed in the Mailing Activity Report.

### **What are the mail classes that I may apply my credits to?**

You may apply the credits to future mailings of First-Class Mail Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and USPS Marketing Mail letters and flats.

### **What are the permit types that I may apply my credits to?**

The permit types that you may apply your credits to are Meter, Precancel, Permit Imprint, OMAS Meter, and OMAS Permit Imprint.

### **How do you use the credits from a Metered permit?**

If a mailer has selected a Metered permit the credits can only be applied to postage balances that are due at the time of mailing and cannot be credited to metered amounts.

### **How do you use the credits when you use a Meter?**

Mailers who wish to use the credits and use a Meter must apply a reduced promotion amount to each piece in the mailing. They must claim the Earned Value Promotion as "RR" in the CCR field or choose the Earned Value Reply Mail Promotion in the drop-down menu in the Postal Wizard. The mailer then uses the credit to pay for the remaining postage. The VAR/CVAR mailers, all options are available: "Lowest", "Correct", and "Neither". For all other mailers, the only option is "Neither".

### **Why is the Activity Report displaying "Incomplete"?**

The Activity Report shows the number of BRM, CRM, and Share Mail pieces counted for an enrolled MID during the promotion period. This counting activity is scheduled to begin April 1 - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019. Therefore, a mailer would not yet see any pieces and the status would be displayed as "Incomplete" before April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.

### **Why are my BRM and CRM permits not eligible under the Payment Accounts Tab?**

The Payment Accounts Tab is where you chose to place your credits in. The type of permit(s) that are eligible are a Meter, Permit Imprint, Precancel, OMAS Meter, and OMAS Permit Imprint.

Therefore, your Business Reply accounts are not eligible. If you use a Mail Service Provider then you may use their permit(s) but you will need to discuss this with them.

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### **Why do I need to monitor my Activity Report on a weekly basis?**

We strongly encourage our customers to monitor their Activity Report on a weekly basis. Our business rules to convert scans into piece counts require that we do periodic look-backs. It could happen, for example, that a piece was counted yesterday when today we see another scan. In that case, we reduce the count for yesterday by one and add it to today's count. This leads to fluctuations in the data displayed in the Earned Value Report. Thus, comparing volumes on a weekly basis is a better way to monitor the CRM, BRM, and Share Mail counts.

### **What happens when a customer's mail counts are different from what reported counts are showing?**

The actual count may differ from reporting counts because scans are machine based. Therefore a variance of around +/- 3% can be expected.

### **If I do not agree with the credits/volumes, can I dispute them?**

Yes, you may **only** dispute your **BRM** and **Share Mail** credits/volumes. Currently there is not a process to dispute your CRM credits/volumes.

### **Can I participate in the Earned Value Promotion and another promotion at the same time?**

Yes, you may participate in the Earned Value Promotion, as well as, another promotion at the same time. If you do an outbound mailing you **MUST** include the requirement(s) from the other promotion in order to claim the 2% discount. If that mailing also includes BRM, CRM, and or Share Mail pieces and you have successfully registered the appropriate MIDS, etc. for Earned Value, then you can earn credit for those pieces that are returned under the Earned Value Promotion.

This is the only instance where the mailer can participate in two promotions – because in reality, there will be two separate mailpieces. Earned Value is the only promotion that can be used with another promotion mailpiece, and only because there are two separate pieces – the outbound mailing (with a qualifying discount-at-entry promotion treatment), and the Earned Value Promotion for the reply pieces.

## **SHARE MAIL**

### **What is Share Mail?**

Share Mail provides a mechanism for customers to share information with multiple parties through the mail without having to affix a stamp. These mailpieces can flow between any two parties. For example, it can flow from one consumer to the next or from a franchise to its customers. The senders do not need to pay postage; it's paid by the customer who produced and distributed the

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mailpieces. Share Mail mailpieces may be deposited into the mailstream in the same ways as other domestic Single-Piece First-Class Mail.

### **How do I participate in the Share Mail Program?**

Mailers interested in participating in the Share Mail Program must follow the Share Mail Publication requirements before enrolling in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion. The Share Mail Program Office email is: [sharemail@usps.gov](mailto:sharemail@usps.gov).

### **I am interested in registering my Share Mail pieces for the 2019 Earned Value Promotion what do I need to do?**

Participants interested in registering their Share Mail pieces must follow the Share Mail Publication requirements before enrolling in the 2019 Earned Value Promotion. The Share Mail Program Office email is: [sharemail@usps.gov](mailto:sharemail@usps.gov) and they will assist you.

### **Does the production of Share Mail First-Class Mail Single-Piece letters or postcards need to be approved by the Postal Service prior to distribution?**

Yes, the production of Share Mail First-Class Mail Single-Piece letters or postcards must be approved by the Share Mail Program Office prior to distribution.

## **USPS TERMINOLOGY**

### **What is an Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb)?**

An IMb is a 65 – bar Postal Service barcode used to sort and track letters and flats. It allows mailers to use a single barcode to participate in multiple Postal Service programs simultaneously, expands mailers ability to track individual mail pieces, and provides greater mail stream visibility.

### **What is the Business Customer Gateway (BCG)?**

The Business Customer Gateway (BCG) is a portal that gives you a single entry point for Postal Service on-line business services.

### **What is a Customer Registration ID (CRID)?**

A CRID is a unique ID for a company name and location combination. The CRID is automatically assigned when you select a Business Account.

### **What is a Mailer Identifier (MID)?**

A MID is assigned by the Postal Service and used to identify the mailer. It is part of the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb).

### **What is a permit account?**

Permit account is the method used to pay for mail, such as: automation First-Class Mail and Standard priced letters and flats. More information can be found on USPS.com:



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<https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm>

### **What is a Mail Service Provider (MSP)?**

A MSP, also referred to as a Mailing Agent, is a company or entity that performs one or more of the following functions on behalf of other companies or organizations: designs, prepares, processes, sorts, or otherwise prepares postcards, letters, flats or packages for acceptance and delivery to the Postal Service.

### **What is the Share Mail System and how can I view the credits available?**

The Postal Services scans IMbs as part of the of the regular mail processing. Those scans are captured and eventually transferred to the Share Mail System. The Share Mail System converts scans into piece counts. Those piece counts become the basis for calculating the Earned Credit in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG).

### **What is a Business Service Administrator (BSA)?**

- Key contact for a Business Location for the management of the selected Service
- Approves and deactivates all company user requests for that Service at a business location
- Establishes the business locations (CRIDS) where permits and Mailer IDS will be linked

## **BUSINESS CUSTOMER GATEWAY (BCG) AND EARNED VALUE ENROLLMENT**

### **How is the BSA assigned?**

- Business Customer Gateway (BCG) sign up process is such that the person who requests access to a business service from a new business location is prompted to assume the BSA role.
- If person declines, the service request goes into a pending status until there is a BSA for the Service at the Business Location
- BSA may delegate additional approved company members to the BSA role

### **What happens if I do not accept the BSA role?**

If you do not accept the BSA role for this service then all requests or services will be pending and you will be unable to proceed until someone accepts this role.

### **What do I do if I get the "Pending External BSA" message?**

If you get the "Pending External BSA" messaging, it means that your request requires a Business Service Administrator (BSA) for the Manage Mailing Activity approval. The BSA is an individual in your organization who has the authority in the system to approve your request. The program office does not have the contact information for this person, but the PostalOne Help Desk does. We recommend emailing the Help Desk and requesting the BSA name and contact info for your company. Give the CRID and Business Customer Gateway (BCG) service you are requesting access.

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The USPS Help Desk can be reached at: (800) 522-9085 or [postalone@email.usps.gov](mailto:postalone@email.usps.gov).

### **For which locations should I become the BSA?**

It is generally recommended that you become the BSA if no BSA exists for a service and location combination. You should become the BSA if you want to manage other user's access to the service for a particular location.

If a service requires BSA approval, there must be a BSA established for your company's mailing locations before members of your company can gain access to the service for those locations. Otherwise the request for the service will remain in "pending". After 25 days, if the BSA role is not filled, your request will automatically be purged, without notification.

### **For which locations should I become the Business Service Administrator (BSA) for Incentive Programs?**

You should become the Incentive Programs BSA of a location if you are elected by your company to perform this role. The Incentive Programs BSA must approve all requests from other users to gain access to the service. As a result, there must be an Incentive Programs BSA for each location that you wish to register in the Incentive Programs service.

When requesting to become Incentive Programs BSA for a location, the request will be pending until the BSA for Manage Mailing Activity (MMA) for that location approves your request. If there is no BSA for Manage Mailing Activity, you can request this role. The request to become MMA BSA is approved automatically by the system when the role is vacant. If already pending, your request to become Incentive Programs BSA will be approved immediately by the system. Otherwise, if you are not to assume the Incentive Programs BSA role, you will have to wait until the Incentive Programs BSA approves your request.

### **REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Section	Reason For Revision	Version
1-8-2019	Earned Value Credits	Additional FAQ on participating in Earned Value Promotion with another Promotion	2